



# Role and Mission of the FA in TF Falcon, Kosovo

by Lieutenant Colonel James M. Waring and Major C. Phillip Royce

On 12 June 1999, the 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery (1-7 FA) was deployed to the Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC) at Hohenfels, Germany, for a scheduled rotation with its maneuver force, the 2d Brigade Combat Team (2d BCT), 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized). On that day, 1-7 FA and its BCT received a warning order (WARNO) for deployment to the province of Kosovo in the former Republic of Yugoslavia.

The battalion was to join the NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR) as part of the international civil and security presence designated Operation Joint Guardian II. This was authorized by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and under the unified NATO command. Included in the peace agreement was the Military Technical Agreement (MTA) that detailed the Serb force withdrawal from Kosovo.

Operation Joint Guardian II came about to complete the NATO air campaign by providing a ground force presence to deter aggression and enforce the provisions of the UN resolution and MTA. This would prove easier said than done.

This article discusses 1-7 FA's lessons learned in Operation Joint Guardian II and highlights illumination missions 1-7 FA fired for the KFOR (in-

cluding for Russians), the first US FA combat missions fired in Balkan peace support operations.

**Mission.** 1-7 FA deployed as part of Task Force (TF) Falcon, the US TF assigned to the Multinational Brigade-East (MNB-E), KFOR. 1-7 FA relieved TF 1-27 FA (Multiple-Launch Rocket System, or MLRS), V Corps Artillery, which had relocated from Albania as part of TF Hawk. TF Falcon fell under the command of the Assistant Division Commander (Maneuver), 1st Infantry Division. The 2d BCT relieved forces of the 1st Armored Division and 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) and assumed the mission to "monitor, verify and, when necessary, enforce compliance with the MTA, provide humanitarian assistance in support of UNHCR [United Nations High Commission for Refugees] and establish basic law and order and core civil functions."

By 4 July, most of the 1-7 FA force package was on the ground at the intermediate staging base (ISB), Camp Able Sentry, Macedonia. Force requirements and a personnel cap largely dictated how the battalion task organized for the deployment. After extensive analysis and many changes, the battalion ended up deploying as shown in Figure 1. D/1-33 FA from the newly formed divisional

multiple-launch rocket system (MLRS) battalion deployed early in the flow and was the first 1st Infantry Division Artillery unit on the ground in Kosovo.

Upon arriving at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, TF 1-7 FA received C Battery, 1-319 FA, 82d Airborne Division, with the continuing non-standard mission "OPCON [under operational control] for fires" the battery had established with TF 1-27 FA. Technically, C/1-319 FA was attached to 2-505 Infantry of the 82d Airborne Division, but TF 1-7 FA established a relationship to ensure positive command and control of all artillery indirect fire systems. This organization was labeled "TF Lightning" and consisted of more than 400 soldiers.

The command and control element for fire support in the TF Falcon tactical command post (TAC) was provided by the 1st Infantry Division fire support element (FSE) and augmented with the target production section (TPS) from D/1-33 FA. The 1-7 FA commander assumed duties as TF Falcon's fire support coordinator (FSCOORD).

**Role of the Artillery.** Initially, there was a great deal of discussion as to whether the TF Falcon "troop list" would include artillery as part of the deployment package. This discussion came as a result of the role of artillery in previ-

Paladins from A/1-7 FA occupy a position by a Serb monastery near Novo Brdo, Kosovo. (Photo by LTC James Waring)

ous peace support operations in the Balkans coupled with concerns for personnel tempo (PERSTEMPO) and the force “cap” (mandated maximum number of US troops).

*Field Manual (FM) 100-23 Peace Operations* is based on previous operations, including Haiti, Somalia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and provided a framework for artillery employment. As stated in FM 100-23, “Fire Support assists commanders in the careful balance of deterrent force with combat power to accomplish the peace operation mission and protect the force.” Deterrence and force protection were pervasive arguments for including artillery.

Previous deployments to the Balkans for peace operations, such as the Imple-

mentation Force (IFOR) and Stability Force (SFOR) missions in Bosnia, initially included artillery units with clearly defined missions. As the environment stabilized, the artillery role diminished. The current mission in Bosnia still includes US artillery units without their howitzers.

The comparison between Bosnia and Kosovo was misleading in many ways—which quickly became apparent after arriving in Kosovo. The most glaring difference was the level of violence, crime and civil disobedience in Kosovo; murder, assault and arson were a daily occurrence. US forces already in the theater had been involved in many situations where automatic gunfire was exchanged; the soldiers of 2d BCT were

exposed immediately to much of the same. The absence of a civil government structure required the KFOR to assume these duties.

Soldiers of TF Lightning assumed a wide variety of missions in support of this challenging operation. First, the TF maintained a visible and responsive fire support structure to provide timely and accurate fires if the situation demanded it. The TF accomplished this by maintaining two “hot guns” on Camps Bondsteel and Montieth, with “hot” platoon operations centers (POCs) linked digitally to the battalion fire direction center (FDC) and the TF Falcon FSE. This gunnery team was in place 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week in a Ready Condition (REDCON) 2 status (15-minute

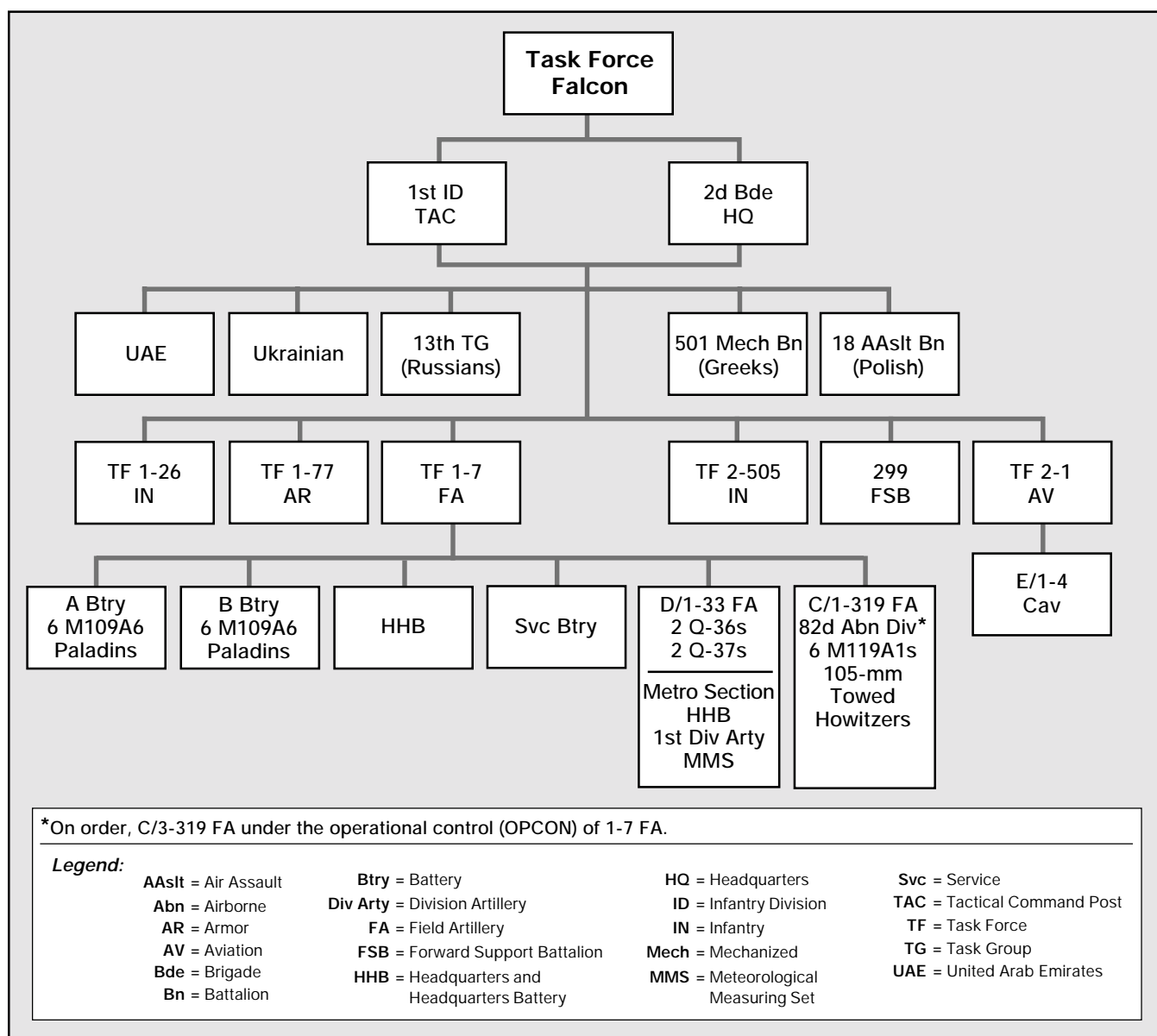


Figure 1: Task Organization of Task Force Falcon and its Artillery. Force requirements and a personnel cap dictated the organization of 1-7 FA.

response time) unless the tactical situation demanded a higher state of readiness. Additionally, TF Lightning provided personnel to man the base camp's perimeter security force.

**Competing Requirements.** TFLighting soldiers began augmenting maneuver forces on checkpoint operations, mounted and dismounted patrols and various security operations "outside the wire" in the MNB-E area of responsibility (AOR). This was driven by a manpower-intensive requirement for soldiers "on the ground" and the limited troops available. Our view was this presented a more suitable mission for our soldiers than working base camp security and "red cycle" tasks.

Although the battalion had received some basic training at the Individual Readiness Training (IRT) and Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRE) at the CMTC in Hohenfels before deploying, our missions required an extensive train up and preparation. The battalion conducted some "right seat rides" with the soldiers from TF 1-27 FA that were extremely helpful and established a baseline for what to expect. The battalion went a step further and coordinated training with our maneuver forces on patrolling, checkpoint and security operations.

Many of these tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) were adopted from the Bosnia lessons learned and the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) products from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Battery commanders, platoon leaders and platoon sergeants quickly developed standing operating procedures (SOPs) and troop-leading procedures for conducting each of these operations. As always, rehearsals were essential for setting the conditions for success.

One of TF Lightning's most challenging missions was the security and logistical support to the International Crimes Tribunal Yugoslavia (ICTY) forensic mission. The ICTY conducted operations at mass gravesites throughout the

AOR to discover and document evidence of alleged war crimes committed by belligerent forces before the NATO and KFOR units arrived.

This was a unique and difficult mission for TF Lightning because of the fundamental nature of the operation, which involved exhuming human remains of all ages from mass gravesites. It also required the TF to work with a wide variety of forensic investigators and pathologists. For this mission, TF Lightning soldiers worked with Canadian, Austrian, Icelandic, Swiss, British and Irish personnel, among others.

Although the TF soldiers didn't have to actually remove remains from gravesites, they were close to these operations and provided the equipment, logistics and security. It was tough duty, but it exposed many of the soldiers to the brutality of this conflict and the harsh realities local nationals had faced before their arrival.

**Fire Support.** Fire support personnel from TF Lightning were immediately put to work operating in local villages and towns with their respective maneuver forces. Less than two weeks after their arrival, fire support personnel with 1-26 Infantry engaged in a firefight in the city of Gnjilane. Shooting erupted when local belligerents fired on US forces to evade capture after committing crimes.

TF Lightning also positioned many FSOs in company command posts to provide command and control for ongoing operations. The large majority of our 13F Fire Support Specialists assumed the same missions as their maneuver counterparts, conducting patrols and checkpoint operations throughout the sector.

Two of the deployed TF FSOs assumed duties as information operations cell (IOC)/targeting officers in two of the largest population centers in the sector. Although they did a superb job, the duties severely restricted their abilities to perform as fire supporters and increased the responsibilities of the TF

fire support NCOs (FSNCOs) and other targeting officers. The decentralized nature of this operation emphasized employing "maneuver shooters."

At the TF Falcon level, fire support played a unique role in peace support operations. While continuing to conduct standard fire support tasks, such as targeting, employing Firefinder radars and conducting TPS operations, the FA intelligence officer and targeting officers also were key players in TF Falcon IO.

Targeting was unique in that it focused on the local population, ethnic groups and even specific individuals or personalities rather than conventional "hard target" sets. The decide, detect, deliver and assess (D<sup>3</sup>A) targeting methodology process still applied, and the FSE targeters provided expertise to members of the IO targeting team.

Deep operations also were applicable but focused on long-term goals, such as changing a specific ethnic group's views or opinions. Once again, many of the lessons learned from Bosnia were applicable in developing the TTP in targeting operations.

**Fire Mission.** US forces have participated in peace support operations in the Balkans for more than four years and, with the deployment of 1-7 FA, had not fired an operational artillery fire mission. Regardless, the TF Lightning developed TTP for employing indirect fires and fire support assets in Kosovo.

The result was a "graduated response matrix" (see Figure 2). This matrix tied the employment of fire support assets to an escalating threat. The process was tempered by the KFOR commander's rules of engagement (ROE). The planning timeline exercised to gain approval and clearance of fires from KFOR was no less than 30 minutes.

Before the 2d BCT arrived, US Army and US Marine forces on the ground many times had requested clearance to fire illumination in the MNB-E sector, but the KFOR denied the requests. On

Situation	Threat	Response
<i>Tier One</i> —Observed Looting, Unruly Crowd	Possible	Hand-held Illumination, M203 Illumination
<i>Tier Two</i> —Unaimed, Unobserved Fire	Likely	Request to Fire 60-mm, 81-mm or 120-mm Mortar Illumination
<i>Tier Three</i> —Sniper Fire, Aimed Fire, Sporadic Firefight	Imminent	All of Above; Request for 105-mm or 155-mm Illumination or Smoke
<i>Tier Four</i> —Sustained Firefight/Casualties Involving KFOR	Actual	All of Above; Mortar or Cannon High Explosive (HE)

Figure 2: Graduated Response Matrix for Fire Support in Task Force Falcon in Kosovo

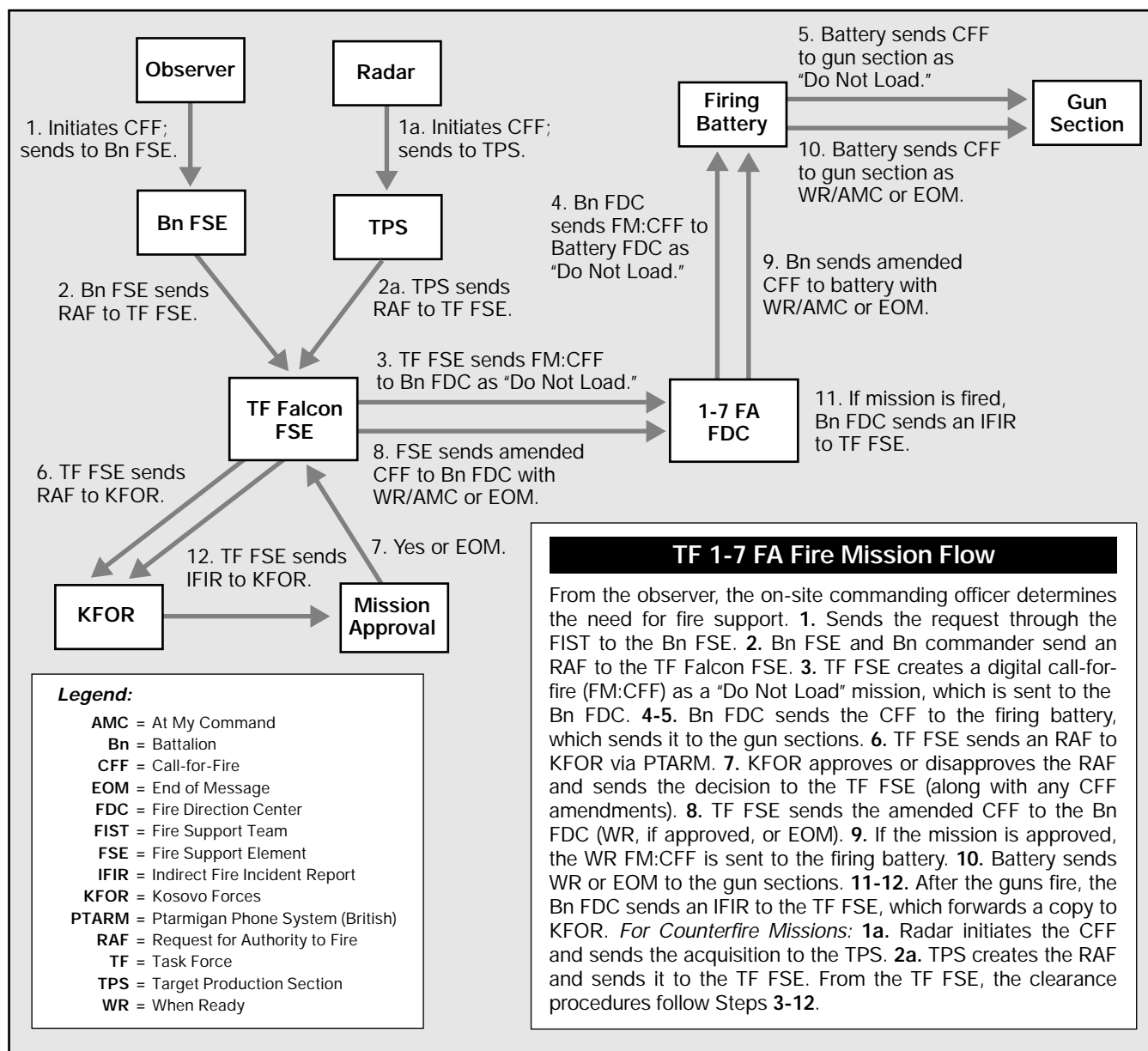


Figure 3: Clearance of Fires Procedures for Task Force Falcon in Kosovo

the night of 30 July, TF Falcon received a report of US soldiers under intense automatic gunfire in the mountainous region north of the city of Gnjilane in the TF 1-26 Infantry's sector. A dismounted infantry team in a remote site reported intense automatic gunfire on its position and that it couldn't extract itself and requested assistance. The belligerents were firing from concealed positions in a secluded wood line and could not be identified.

The TF Falcon commander initially directed the team be extracted by armored vehicles, the closest of which were a TF Lightning Paladin howitzer and FA ammunition support vehicle (FAASV) guarding a Serbian church about six miles away. Meanwhile, a

quick reaction force (QRF) was dispatched from Camp Montieth in Gnjilane. A few minutes later, before the Paladin could reach the dismounted team, it reported the enemy had broken contact. But when the QRF arrived, it, then, was taken under automatic gunfire.

At that point, the TF Falcon commander cancelled the Paladin extraction and told the FSCOORD to prepare to fire illumination rounds to "flush" the belligerents out of their positions and help identify their locations. Simultaneously, AH-64 Apache helicopters were dispatched to the area to help locate the source of fires.

A Battery, "Steel Knights" on Camp Montieth on the outskirts of Gnjilane

was designated to fire the mission. TF Lightning initiated a fire mission in a "Do Not Load" status while the TF Falcon FSE began the clearance of fires drill both with the KFOR in Pristina and internally to MNB-E (see Figure 3).

Our biggest concern and longest delay was clearing airspace through the Army airspace command and control (A<sup>2</sup>C<sup>2</sup>) process. The TF cleared indirect fires through both headquarters and had to account for fixed wing, rotary wing and unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) aircraft operating in the sector. The call-for-fire (CFF) was initiated by the QRF who had "eyes on." Additionally, a Q-36 radar was placed in the "friendly fire mode" to confirm impact predict and track TF rounds.





LTC James Waring (left), Commander of TF Lightning, and his CSM Carl McPherson confer with Serb Orthodox priests at a Serbian monastery that soldiers from 1-7 FA are guarding north of the city of Gnjilane in Kosovo.

The TF developed a drill that took clearance of fires a step further. The FSE used satellite imagery of the AOR on its automated deep operations coordination system (ADOCS) software and zoomed in on the target area to confirm there were no dwellings or urban areas that might receive collateral damage from illumination canisters or be ignited by an illumination round. The FDC also computed an automatic “up 100” for the illumination to minimize the threat to burnout on the ground or on a dwelling. Furthermore, the TF maintained “eyes on” the target with UAV and AH-64 aircraft. This was a dynamic process as the target location grid and confirmed locations of friendly ground troops and aircraft changed many times in quick succession.

Approximately 45 minutes after the initial reports of contact, A/1-7 FA fired two illumination rounds that were “observed safe, accurate and effective.” These were the first US artillery rounds fired in an operational mission in Balkans peace support operations.

The mission met its intent as the belligerents immediately ceased firing and were not heard from again. The rounds were tracked by the Q-37 radar on Camp Bondsteel and observed by the UAV and AH-64 pilots as well as the TF 1-26 Infantrymen on the ground. The effect of the outbound rounds was equally dramatic to the residents of Gnjilane as local nationals scurried to their homes and left the streets deserted.

The TF Falcon psychological operations (PSYOP) teams exploited this mission to publicize the firepower and lethality that TF Falcon could bring to

bear. The PSYOP teams issued flyers to locals throughout the area, reassuring peaceful Kosovars and warning potential belligerents. The flyers read, “*This is KFOR artillery!* Last night you witnessed illumination rounds being fired. Will the next rounds be high explosive? Cease your firing on the village immediately or become a KFOR target. Helping Kosovo on the road to peace—KFOR Task Force Falcon.”

TF Lightning and 1-7 FA made history again on the 4th of August as the battalion fired two more fire missions, but this time in support of Russian counterparts operating in the northeast portion of the MNB-E sector. This marked the first time since World War II that US artillery had fired in support of Russian forces on an operational mission.

Under circumstances similar to the previous mission, the Russian compound in the city of Kamenica came under sustained automatic gunfire, which resulted in one Russian soldier wounded. Employing their US special operations liaison team, the Russians requested illuminating fires from TF Falcon to identify and flush belligerent forces from positions on the high ground surrounding the compound.

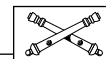
Using lessons learned from the first illumination mission, TF Lightning streamlined its response time to 17 minutes, including clearing fires. Again, A Battery fired at maximum range from Camp Montieth. Again, the fires were accurate and effective and the belligerent firing ceased immediately.

TF Lightning fired two more missions for the Russians the next night under almost identical conditions: two rounds

in staggered succession on the first mission and four rounds laterally spread on the subsequent mission. The results were the same.

During Operation Joint Guardian II, TF Lightning validated the role of the FA and fire support in peace support operations as defined in FM 100-23. While also performing unique missions, such as patrolling, perimeter security and such, the US artillery never sacrificed its ability to provide timely and accurate fires in support of maneuver forces. This is a constant challenge as artillery forces are frequently viewed as forces “available” to augment the “boots on the ground” requirements or perform force protection or base camp mayoral duties.

While the tactical situation in each operation is unique, leaders and planners must carefully review and consider the requirements for fire support and artillery. The first rule is the Field Artillery is the absolute King of Battle and you need it. *Duty First!*



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